



The CJA Monitor



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Winter 2006

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From the Director

It is hard to believe another holiday season has come and gone. The New Year typically involves reflecting on the past and looking towards the future.

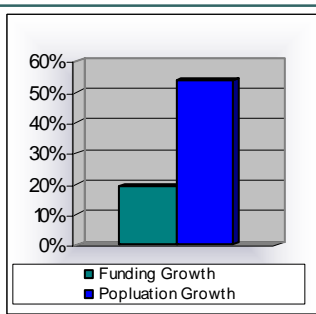
Reflections For the CJA, the reflection reaches back ten years. As mentioned in past newsletters, the CJA reached the ten-year mark of its restructuring under laws implemented in Fiscal Year 1996 (FY96). Looking back, a great deal has changed in the past ten years.

Budget: In FY96 the CJA's annual budget was just under \$1.2M. When I joined the Agency at the end of FY99, the budget had increased 13% to just over \$1.34M. Today, the CJA's budget exceeds \$1.75M. Approximately 90% of the CJA's budget is devoted to salaries and benefits.

Staff & Salaries: The num-

ber of staff grew the most between FY96 and FY99 when it increased from 26 to 34 full and part-time staff (excluding planning staff). Today, staffing includes 36 full and part-time individuals.

In FY96, the average starting salary for a CCD full-time professional was \$21,733. There was rela-



Above— Community Corrections & Pretrial Services Population Growth vs. Funding Increases from FY1997 to FY2005

tively little change in this by the end of FY99. In 2000 I initiated a change in how

CCD positions were allocated, creating greater advancement opportunities for educated and experienced individuals as well as a competitive salary structure. Today's average starting salary for a CCD full-time professional is \$30,783; Pretrial salaries are similar. Market pay adjustments approved by the City, performance-based raises, and longevity pay allow CCD and Pretrial full-time professional staff to increase their salary annually. The average salary of the CJA's CCD and Pretrial full-time professional staff is \$34,513.

Since FY01, salary adjustments, increases in health insurance and retirement benefits, and a budget cut have limited overall staff growth and forced two rounds of layoffs.

Workload: The workload in

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What Do Pretrial Investigators Do?

Currently there are six pretrial investigators employed by the Hampton-Newport News Criminal Justice Agency. Four work in the Newport News office and two in Hampton. Cumulatively, they have over 70 years experience in the criminal justice field. Work schedules are structured to meet the goal of completing an investigation on nearly everyone being arraigned in the General District and Cir-

cuit Courts in both cities. Defendants that are not investigated include those being charged only with a parole violation, detainees from other jurisdictions or being held for extradition, or with a Federal or US Marshall's hold. Juveniles are not investigated unless they are being considered as an adult by the court.

The primary responsibility of a pretrial investigator is to

provide judicial officers with crucial background information on defendants prior to their arraignment. At a minimum, the information given to the court includes a current criminal history report retrieved from the FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN), the local Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), and state De-

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From the Director

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Pretrial Services has experienced some changes since FY96. During that year, 1,154 individuals were placed under Pretrial supervision. This increased to 1,303 in FY99 and to 1,357 in FY05. The number of investigations completed by Pretrial Services has decreased over the years. In FY05 the CJA completed 6,370 investigations; approximately 900 fewer than in FY96 and about 740 fewer than FY99. Despite this, the workload in Pretrial grew quite a bit with the passage of various "rebuttable presumption" laws. Under these laws, individuals with certain charges and criminal histories are automatically denied bond. This led to a surge in bond hearings completed by the CJA. In FY05, the CJA completed 917 bond hearings in addition to investigations. Throughout the ten years, Pretrial has typically maintained a success rate of 88-89% (with two years at 90%).

The workload in CCD has seen far more dramatic increases than Pretrial during the last 10 years. After the first year under the new laws, CCD received 2,457 placements. This increased to 3,275 in FY99 and to 3,958 in FY05. The greatest impact is seen in the average daily caseload (ADC)...how many are under supervision at any given time. In FY97, the ADC was about 628 (we don't have this for FY96). When I joined the CJA, the ADC had risen to 900. By the end of FY05, the ADC was over 1,700. Despite the tremendous growth, CCD has maintained an average success rate of 68%.

Looking Ahead For the first time in ten years, the Governor's budget includes an increase in the base budget for community corrections and pretrial services. Though this is a tremendous step forward, the increase falls short of what is needed.

The budgetary increases we've received to date have done little more than help offset the increases we pay for health insurance, retirement benefits, and overhead. The CJA and other agencies like it are understaffed and ill-equipped to fulfill their missions. If this fiscal year ends as it began, the CJA will see record breaking placements and caseloads in both CCD and Pretrial. Without a substantial increase in funds, additional staff to handle the continuing increase in work won't be possible. Furthermore, if the state is successful in raising salaries for similar positions, the CJA salaries will not be as competitive in the local market.

All of the efforts made towards implementing evidence-based practices, including bringing salaries to competitive levels, keeping performance measures strong, and training staff can easily be lost. The options ahead could quickly result in forgoing quality supervision in favor of quantity...becoming an agency that simply processes court orders.

Efforts are being made to increase what is in the Governor's budget, and both the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League support additional funds for community corrections and pretrial services. The CJA's direction to-

wards evidence-based practices is in line with other risk reduction efforts embraced by Hampton and Newport News (such as drug court programming, positive youth development, and healthy family initiatives among many other risk reduction efforts). Hopefully, enough funding will come forth in the next year so that the CJA can continue in this positive direction and avoid the less attractive alternative.



CJA Receives NIC Technical Assistance Grant

In 2005, the CJA applied to the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) for a grant supporting training for trainers in the area of motivational interviewing. (Motivational interviewing is a directive, evidence-based approach of communication designed to enhance moti-

vation for change in high-risk and resistant clients.) NIC approved the application and paid a nationally recognized expert, Dr. Marilyn VanDieten with Orbis Partners Inc., to develop a curriculum for the CJA and provide five days of on-site training.

During the first two days of training, attendees previewed the curriculum, delivered by Dr. VanDieten, which provides an introduction to the principles and practices of motivational interviewing (MI). Since most

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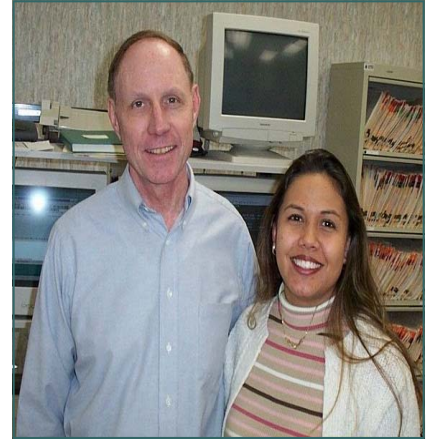
What Do Pretrial Investigators Do?

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partment of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The Virginia Supreme Court computer is also used when available. If the defendant is currently being supervised by other agencies such as probation, parole, or community corrections then those agencies are also contacted and queried as to the defendant's suitability for supervised release. Every attempt is made to conduct a personal, face to face, interview with each defendant. The interview is conducted in the respective jail, and is voluntary on the defendant's part (they sign a consent form). The interview focuses on collecting information useful in assessing the defendant's potential to flee or re-offend if released from jail pending trial and the risk to the community if released. The defendants are questioned as to their residence, family ties, employment, health, substance abuse and other information helpful in decision making. Whenever possible this information is verified by the defendant's family or other reference.

Information gathered is entered into a computerized risk assessment program that assigns a risk level based on predetermined risk factors. The formal risk assessment is given to the court along with the original interview form and criminal history report. Investigators are not bound by the formal risk assessment instrument and can recommend what they consider the best option based on the information available, their training, standard operating procedures and their experience.

Pretrial investigators take pride in their reports and always strive to provide complete, accurate and current information available at the time.



Above: Sr. Pretrial Investigator Carl Glass and Pretrial Investigator Erika Krueger

CJA By The Numbers: Second Quarter FY2006

Second Quarter highlights FY2006:

Community Corrections

- ◆ **2,119** individuals placed under supervision
- ◆ Total active average daily caseload of **1,835**
- ◆ **\$15,825.36** in victim restitution facilitated
- ◆ **32,120** hours of community service performed by clients
- ◆ **448** service referrals for substance abuse testing, education and/or counseling
- ◆ **173** service referrals to Anger Management groups
- ◆ **56** service referrals to Batterer's Intervention
- ◆ **814** service referrals to community service

Pretrial Services

- ◆ **3,249** Defendants investigations completed
- ◆ **592** Bond hearing investigations completed
- ◆ **820** Individuals placed under supervision
- ◆ An overall successful completion rate of **84%**
- ◆ An overall failure to appear (FTA) rate of only **5.6%**
- ◆ **293** service referrals for substance abuse testing, education and/or counseling
- ◆ Total active average daily caseload of **435**



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The mission of the CJA is to promote public safety through the provision of community-based pretrial and post conviction programs, services and criminal justice planning to the Cities

Mission Statement:

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CJA Receives NIC Technical Assistance Grant

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attendees had already participated in some evidence-based practices and MI training, the curriculum was easily understood. During the next three days of training, attendees practiced delivering the curriculum to others. Participants received feedback from Dr. VanDieten during practice sessions.

Participants completing the training are allowed to deliver the curriculum to others within their agencies. The CJA had 9 individuals complete the training and is well situated to train existing and new staff. By offering training slots to others, four other agencies benefited from this training as well.

In order to deliver the curriculum beyond their agencies, individuals must complete additional course work, have trainings video taped and critically reviewed, and deliver the training under the guidance of someone certified in training MI trainers. For more information on MI or MI training, visit



Above: Participants pose for a group picture on the final day of training

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